

2015 NVSBE WRAP-UP

In its fifth year, the National Veterans Small Business Engagement (NVSBE) continues to prove as the most effective way to directly connect Veteran businesses with potential buyers in the federal and commercial marketplaces.

On November 17–19, 2015, in Pittsburgh, PA, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)—along with other government agencies and corporations—brought together more than 3,200 attendees, both buyers and suppliers, for three full days of engagement and reengagement to discuss procurement needs and contracting opportunities.

Every moment of NVSBE was packed with energy, inspiration, networking—and *most importantly*, access. With such an unprecedented level of engagement exhibited at this year's event, connections made at NVSBE will foster business success well into the future. Jack Coley of Coley Solutions (a VA-verified SDVOSB in San Antonio, TX) mentions, *"Few events for Veteran business owners will get you this close to decision makers."*

NVSBE is a prime example of VA's commitment to MyVA—the Department's initiative to provide Veterans with a seamless, integrated, and responsive customer-service experience. Serving as its signature event for the Veteran small business community, VA brought nearly 400 procurement decision makers (PDMs) who seek to do business with Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs). For many businesses that attended 2015 NVSBE, *"It was a great opportunity to connect with small businesses and decision makers from the Department of Veterans Affairs"* says Halfaker and Associates, a VA-verified SDVOSB.

Overall, \$1.3 billion in contracts have been awarded to procurement-ready Veteran businesses as a result of NVSBE. Dave Dennis of VA-verified The St. John Group, LLC also adds, *"Another great VA conference. Even better than last year. Great support for small biz. Ready to help vets and VA in 2016."*

Throughout 2016, VA will host industry-specific access events – nationally – to expand the mission of its Direct Access Program by offering small and Veteran businesses access to unique opportunities to build partnerships, maximize networking, and secure connections.

2015 NVSBE AT-A-GLANCE NVSBE 2015 attracted 3,235 registrants, including:

- 1,432 VOSBs
- 420 small businesses
- 281 Women-Owned Small Businesses
- 104 Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) businesses
- 378 PDMs
- NVSBE attendees also took part in:
- 188 Business Opportunity Sessions
- 764 Dining with Decision Makers Plenary Luncheons

- 12 Executive Roundtables hosted by senior executives from VA and the Department of the Army
- 5 General Sessions hosted by executive Leaders from VA and the Department of the Army
- 99 Learning Sessions
- 2,129 Networking Tables
- 18 Senior Leader Overviews
- 24 Senior Leader Roundtables

Below are just a few of the many comments received from PDMs and small businesses regarding what they liked most about the Engagement:

- *Overall communication with the attendees was very good and they understand that you are there for the betterment of not only their individual locations. I liked the exhibitors all around our booth as it seems everyone there understands that we are all in the same boat and working together on a common goal to improve our government facilities and most importantly helping the veterans that have served and fought for this country.*
- *The opportunity to connect with decision makers whom we would not normally get to meet in person. It was good to hear about upcoming budgets and possible opportunities. The conference center was very nice.*
- *We like being able to be in front of the VA, this is a good show for us*
- *Great venue, spacing for all exhibitors was well done!*
- *The venue and the space was great for Dining with Decision Makers, well-lit and spacious exhibit hall, breakout session rooms were nice and clean. Location was great, very close to most hotels and restaurants*
- *The convenience of everything being centralized*
- *Exposure to important points of contact at VA*
- *The networking during lunch was very helpful*
- *The Business-to-Business sessions were very informative and interactive*
- *Overall, we all agree that NVSBE is critical to continue engagement with support of our outreach program and market research for all DoD. Grace Fontana, Associate Director Small Business, USACE*
- *NVSBE allowed me to collaborate with other small business specialists, and through knowledge-sharing, I am better prepared to assist [the] small business community in navigating FedBizOpps and FPNS-NG to maximize their opportunities to compete for government contracts! Dawneen Williams, Small Business Specialist, VA Service Area Office (SAO)-West*

Save the date! Be sure to join us for **2016 NVSBE** on **November 1–3** in **Minneapolis, MN**.

Follow the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Use hashtag **#NVSBE2015**.

See you in Minneapolis - 2016!